

T.L. Thorpe Building
19 Traction Street
Manchester ~~Hillsborough~~
Hillsborough County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-121

HABS
NH,
6-MANCH,
10-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

T. L. THORPE BUILDING (MOONEY FURNITURE)

HABS No. NH-121

HABS
NH,
6-MANCH,
10-

ADDRESS: 19 Traction Street
Manchester, New Hampshire 03101

PRESENT
OWNER: Manchester Housing Authority

PRESENT
OCCUPANT: Vacant

PRESENT USE: Formerly furniture storage; scheduled for demolition November 1, 1982.

SIGNIFICANCE: The T. L. Thorpe Building is significant for its association with a well-known local Manchester merchant in the textile trade and for its architectural design, which employed an arcaded facade of a type common in Manchester in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It has been postulated that large glazed openings of the type used on the first floor of this building were very common among grocers' and provision dealers' buildings. Indeed, the first floor of this building was occupied by Chandler and Company, Wholesale Commission Merchants and Produce Dealers.

G. B. Chandler was influential in founding the Manchester Board of Trade in 1891-92. Begun in a period of civic improvement nationwide, the Board of Trade set out to "promote the prosperity of the Queen City of New Hampshire" in such a way as to encourage the improvement of the municipality.

Thomas L. Thorpe, whose office was upstairs, was one of the most widely known textile merchants in the city and held various public offices including those of councilman, alderman, and state representative.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: c. 1881
2. Original and subsequent owners: Recorded at Hillsborough County Record of Deeds, 19 Temple Street, Nashua, New Hampshire:

1879 Deed, November 1, 1879, recorded in Volume 450, page 308. Amoskeag Manufacturing Company to Joseph A. Brown.

- 1879 Deed, November 1, 1879, recorded in Volume 451, page 257. Joseph A. Brown to Thomas L. Thorpe.
- 1902 Deed, December 13, 1902, recorded in Volume 615, page 387. Thomas L. Thorpe to Joseph A. Brown.
- 1914 Deed, January 2, 1914, recorded in Volume 718, page 462. George M. Davis and Ernest Hollman as executors under the will of Joseph A. Brown to Oscar Schoninger.
- 1937 Will, August 6, 1937. On death of Oscar Schoninger to Lena Schoninger.
- 1943 Will, December 22, 1943. On death of Lena Schoninger to Gustave Babel.
- 1950 Will, January 9, 1950. On death of Gustave Babel to Milda P. Ringenwald and Ida Ringenwald.
- 1957 Will, April 16, 1957. On death of Ida Ringenwald to Milda P. Ringenwald, Silvia Dalloff and Alice Cullen.
- 1977 Deed, July 11, 1977, recorded in Volume 2545, page 186. Milda P. Ringenwald, Silvia Dalloff and Alice Cullen to Mark Reingold, David Reingold and Paul Reingold.
- 1982 Notice of Condemnation and Declaration of Taking, April 27, 1982, recorded in Volume 2915, page 500-522. Transference of title to Manchester Housing Authority.

3. Architect: Unknown.

4. Builder: Unknown.

5. Original plans and construction: Unknown.

6. Alterations and additions: The exterior appearance of the building is largely unaltered with the exception of the removal of the four stove chimney stacks from the roof level and the partial covering with plywood of four of the storefront windows (which have been broken).

The interior of the building is essentially a finished shell, all of the interior partitions having been removed to create clear space for storage purposes. A rough partition has been added behind the front door to create a small workroom on the southwest corner of the first floor.

B. Historical Context: The Thorpe Building is opposite the now-cleared City Yard in an area south of the central business district. This area, which was also near the mills, was important to the growth of the city in the last two decades of the nineteenth century because the railroad station was located nearby.

Chandler and Company, Wholesale Commission Merchants and General Produce Dealers, the main tenant of the building, probably depended on the railroad for some wholesale provision shipments.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The building at 19 Traction Street is a three-story brick commercial block, rectangular in plan. It appears from Traction Street to be free-standing, although it is not since it shares a party wall with the building immediately behind it. The building has four bays across the upper story facade and a five-bay storefront. In depth, it is four bays also.
1. Architectural character: Stylistically the building belongs to the High Victorian Italianate period. The modest scale of such a building would normally demand no special design treatment. However, in this building, a local builder or architect added special character to the design by the creation of an arcaded facade at the ground floor. The arcade, which is composed of five brick arches supported on corner piers and four Doric cast-iron columns (surrounding knee-wall piers), is a strong Italianate feature of the building. It is directly related to Renaissance design and specifically to the works of Brunelleschi, Sansovino, and other northern Italian architects. A similar arcade was used on the facade of the E. M. Slayton Wholesale Produce and Provision warehouse on Granite Street. This latter facade is now obscured or substantially altered by remodelling.
 2. Condition of fabric: Structurally, the building is sound except for several rotted floor joist ends in the cellar. Finishes have deteriorated with neglect but are generally intact except for glass.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Height, 32'; south elevation, 30'; east elevation, 45'.
2. Foundations: Cut granite.
3. Walls: The red brick load-bearing walls are laid up in English bond. The main (south) elevation is characterized by a recessed rectangular wall panel on the upper two stories enframed by engaged corner pilasters with projecting sheet metal caps. On the ground floor the extrados of the round arches is articulated with one header course of brick. There are plain brick panels beneath each of the bays. A narrow belt course of brick with dentils beneath serves as a small sign architrave and divides the upper and lower wall planes.

There is a granite sill course at sidewalk level on the front corners of the building. The east and west walls are unadorned. The north wall is a party wall with a building to the rear which was part of the Mooney Furniture Warehouse operation in this century.

4. Structural system framing: The interior structure is post-and-beam. Girts are 12 by 12 in dimension with brick supporting piers, and the joists are two-by-twelves, 16 inches on center.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: An open fire escape on the third floor, west facade, is a balcony space.
6. Chimneys: The building had four chimneys, two on each side wall in the interior position. Stove pipe holes are still visible from the interior. One chimney remains in the southwest corner where a furnace had been located. The stove chimneys in the exterior walls were integral with the wall planes and did not have foundations but were corbelled and headed at the first floor level.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to the building is an arched opening at grade on the south facade of the building. Three steps of granite mark the center entrance, and the doorway has sidelights. The door is of wood with a large pane of glass (broken) above two panels. It is probably not original to the building.

On the east elevation there is a slightly oversized wooden sliding door opening into the alley; presumably this door was used for larger deliveries. Also on this elevation is a rear door.

- b. Windows and shutters: On the main facade, the five storefront bays consist of round-headed arched windows each divided and supported by cast iron columns, forming an arcade effect. The windows are large pane two-over-two and the doorway has a transom light contoured to the round arch. Above the arcade, the window openings are segmentally arched with corbelled brick hood molds and cut granite sills. Sash is two-over-two, double-hung. On other facades, the windows are segmentally arched without molds.
8. Roof
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat or valley, built up.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: The projecting cornice contains corbelled brackets of modest scale and has a sheet metal cap. The eaves project over the east and west elevation.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: The main floor has a partitioned area incorporating the two easterly bays of the building and extending to about half of its depth. The upper floors are currently open, interrupted only by structural posts and a rear stair and elevator or hoist shaft (which also break the plan of the main floor). The floor plan of the upper levels once consisted of a center hallway which ran from the front of the building to the rear, with four rooms on either side. All of the partitions have been removed, but the plan is reflected in the paint and plaster of the ceiling.

2. Stairways: The stairwell to the upper levels is in the rear and is sheathed with beaded matchboarding.
3. Flooring: The basement floor is dirt with some concrete. Ground and upper floors were probably hardwood. These remain in part.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The rear wall of the third floor was sheathed in matchstick panelling. Otherwise, walls were probably plastered and painted or wall-papered (the latter on the second floor, suggesting possible domestic use). An eight-inch mop board bands the interior perimeter. Woodwork appears to be hard pine. Ceilings were covered with matchstick and painted or varnished.
5. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: On the first floor, doorway trim is plain. Partitions have been removed above.
 - b. Windows: On the first floor, window trim is plain, but on the upper floors, the window frames have Eastlake trim with incised linear decorations including corner blocks with pateras.
6. Decorative features: First floor posts are simple turned columns in two rows, four to a row.
7. Hardware: Some original window hardware (locks) exists. Door hardware is missing.
8. Mechanical equipment
 - a. Heating: Stoves have been removed.
 - b. Lighting: Electrical.
 - c. Plumbing: None.
 - d. Hoist: A small block and tackle hoist was used to raise and lower goods to and from the upper floors via a shaft near the back of the building.
- D. Site: The building occupies the entirety of a rectangular lot on a north-south grid with its principal facade to the south. The site is nearly flat.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Interview: Manager and salesman at Mooney's Furniture, West Central Street, Manchester, New Hampshire, April 8, 1980.

B. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Manchester, New Hampshire. Manchester Historical Association. Records of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. Property sold in Mill Yard: Index.
2. Secondary and published sources:

Bacon, George F. Manchester and Its Leading Business Men. Boston: Mercantile Publishing Co., 1891.

Clarke, John B. Manchester Directory and Statistical Manual. Manchester: Mirror Steam Printing Works, 1875-1901.

Flynn, Thomas, comp. Atlas of the City of Manchester, New Hampshire. Philadelphia: O. L. Miller and Company, 1896.

Hurd, D. H. and Company. Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire. Boston: D. H. Hurd and Company, 1892.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, Fire Insurance Maps of Manchester, New Hampshire. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1921, 1939.

Willey, George F. Willey's Semi-Centennial Book of Manchester. Manchester: George F. Willey, 1896.

C. Supplemental Material

1. National Register eligibility research prepared by Christopher Closs, Consultant to the Manchester Housing Authority, May, 1980. Mr. Closs' research constitutes the most extensive, organized body of information on this building and has formed the basis for this document.
2. State of New Hampshire--NHDPWH/U.S. Department of Transportation.
3. United States Geological Survey, Manchester Quadrangle, New Hampshire, 15 Minute Series.
4. Granite Street Site Project, February 7, 1980. Property Line Map, Manchester Housing Authority, Thomas F. Moran, Inc., Bedford, New Hampshire 03102.

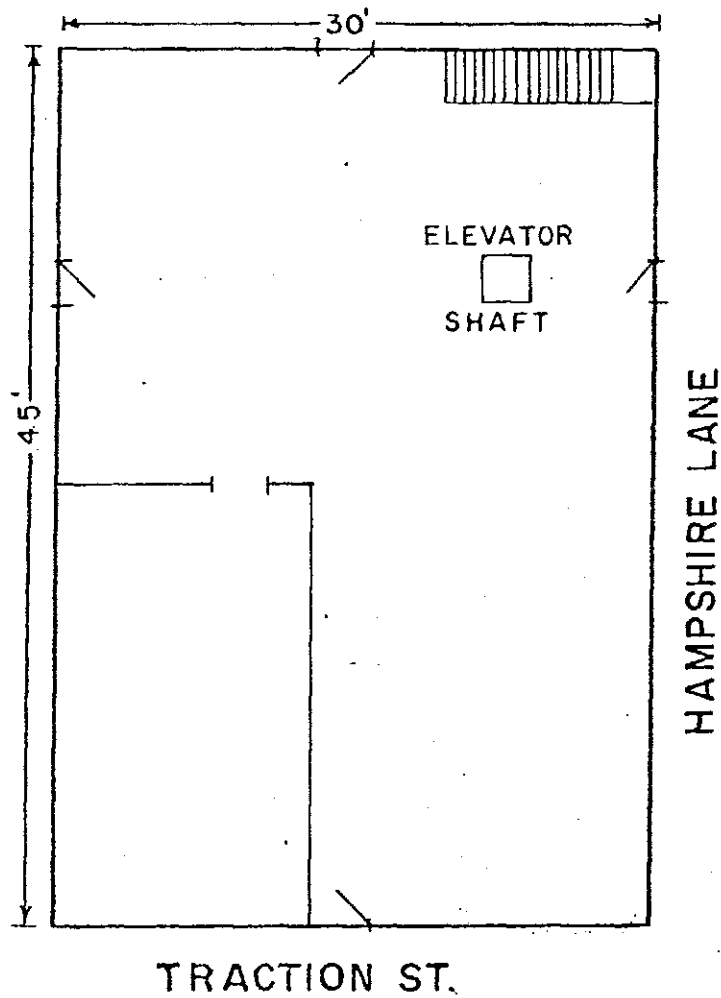
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The T. L. Thorpe Building is to be demolished as part of the Granite Street Development Project in Manchester, New Hampshire. Part of the funding for the project is an Urban Development Action Grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. This Federal involvement triggered the Section 106 review process which resulted in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) being executed in May, 1981 between the City of Manchester and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Stipulation IV of the MOA allowed for the demolition of three of the five National Register Eligible buildings in the project area after documentation to Historic American Building Survey standards (formerly National Architectural Engineering Record). The T. L. Thorpe Building is one of those buildings.

Of the other two historic buildings, one is not to be acquired as part of the redevelopment and the other is to be incorporated into the project. The project includes a hotel, ballroom, convention center, office building, retail mall, bus station, public parking garage, public park, and street realignment.

Documentation prepared by Vision, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts for the Manchester Housing Authority. Participants were Michael Robinson, AIA, AICP; Lance Neckar; and Stephen Wheeler.

Documentation prepared on October 8, 1982.



1st FLOOR

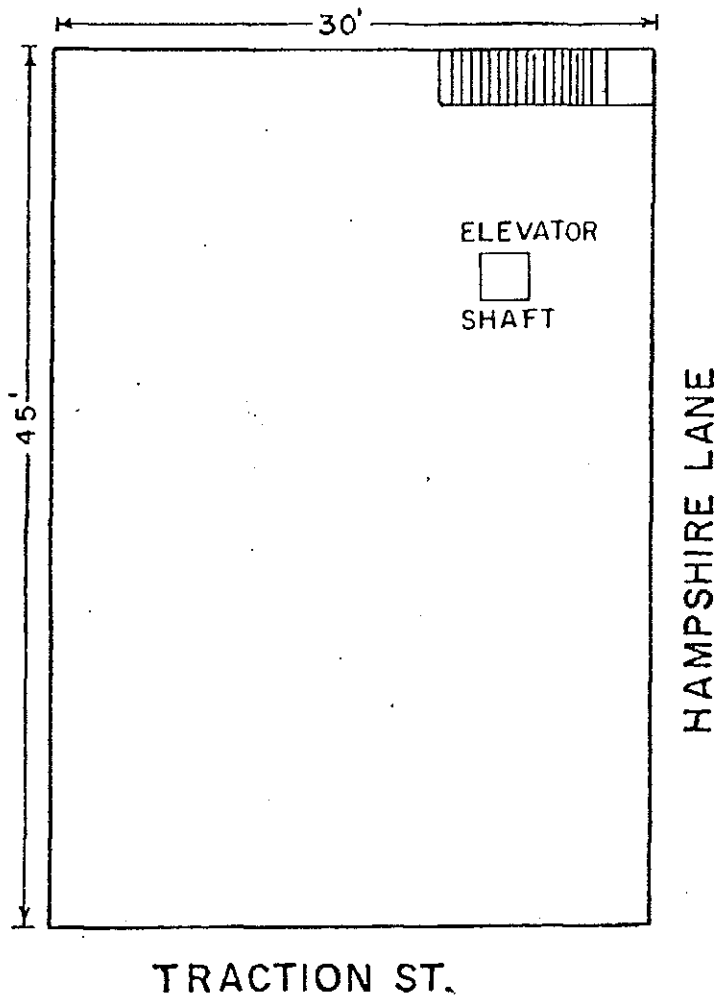
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T.L. THORPE BUILDING
19 TRACTION ST.

BLOCK NO. 538
PARCEL NO. 6

SCALE: 1" = 10'
DATE: AUGUST 1982



2nd. FLOOR

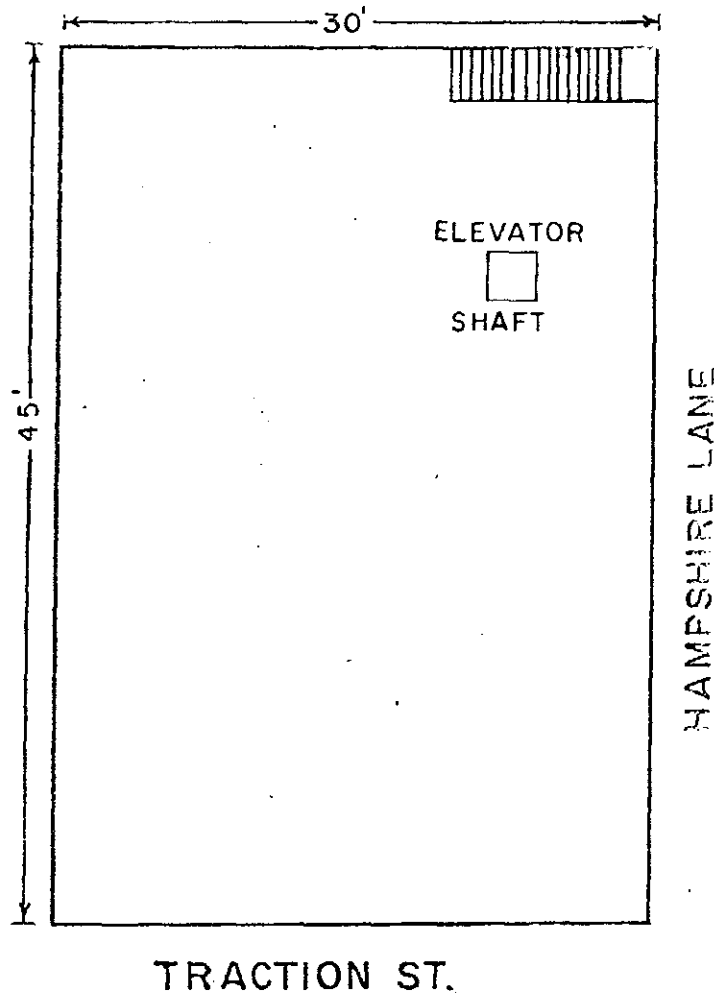
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3rd. FLOOR



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